



A newsletter about the *My Health, My Choice, My Life* initiative across the State of Tennessee.

# Tomorrow Starts Today



July 2015

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## 2015 NAMI Davidson County Walk and 5K By Donald Williams, Peer Wellness Coach

On April 11, 2015, NAMI Davidson County hosted the community Walk/5K at Shelby Park. This is an annual event that had a festival environment in which different organizations set up booths in the "Village". These organizations included: Vanderbilt Behavioral Health, Mental Health Cooperative, United Healthcare Community, Amerigroup, Centerstone, Research Match, Heroes in Recovery, Tristar Skyline Madison, Tristar Centennial, Diggs Disability, Your Health on Art, TAADAS (Tennessee Association of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services), TSPN (Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network), and HAPI (Healing Arts Project, Inc). Most organizations also had representatives for the Walk/5K teams. Also participating in the walk were goldens from the Middle Tennessee Golden Retriever Rescue. I was invited to head the walking group in a warm-up physical activity and operate the My Health, My Choice, My Life booth. This was my first solo experience promoting My Health, My Choice, My Life at a community event. I enjoyed meeting the many different people and feeling the togetherness of the group. The weather was perfect that day, and I was told that the event has grown each year. I am very thankful that Robin Nobling invited us to participate this year. I'm looking forward to promoting the My, Health, My Choice, My Life initiative at the organization in the future!

## 2015 Nashville Championship Games Celebrate Wellness

By Allison Harwell, Peer Wellness Coach

Championship Games events for peer support center members and participants in other behavioral health programs have been a hallmark of the *My Health, My Choice, My Life* initiative since its inception four years ago. Middle Tennessee hosted a Championship Games on May 8<sup>th</sup> at Edwin Warner Park in Nashville.

Designed primarily to inspire physical activity among those who are in recovery from mental illness, these events also help build self-esteem as well as communication and team-building skills.

“It’s so neat to see how the Championship Games have grown and improved over the last several years. It’s very heartwarming to see so many people outdoors being active and having fun. I loved the team spirit displayed by each center and the creativity and hard work that went into creating each of the banners,” said Sue Karber, Director of Consumer Wellness Programs for the state’s Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.

About 75 people, including peer wellness coaches, attended the games and competed in a tennis ball throw, 50-yard dash and speed walk, tug-of-war and a water relay race. Mark Bresee, Peer Wellness Coach from Chattanooga, also led a martial arts activity that involved breaking boards with the palm of the hand. And some attendees played yard games or created art work.

Coaches presented certificates to individuals and teams that won events, as well as a Most Team Spirit trophy and Best Banner trophy. Our Place Peer Support Center from Murfreesboro won Most Team Spirit, and Reconnect Peer Support Center from Nashville won the Best Banner award. Donald Williams, the Peer Wellness Coach who organized the games, said he enjoyed seeing months of planning evolve into a successful event.

Special thanks to the sponsors, who provided sandwiches from Subway and fruit for a healthy lunch: Amerigroup, BlueCare Tennessee, and UnitedHealthcare.



# Diabetes Self-Management Program (DSMP) Helps Scott County Peer Regain Health

By James Pincham, Peer Wellness Coach

A resident of Scott County who recently completed a Diabetes Self-Management Program (DSMP) workshop said the curriculum helped her learn vital skills to manage her illness and stay alive.

Linda struggles with a variety of illnesses in addition to diabetes. She has also been in recovery for alcohol and drug addiction for the past eight years. Since completing the workshop several weeks ago, Linda has received two healthy blood panels from her primary care doctor.

“Learning how to put together healthy meals, read nutrition labels, and balance my day with physical activity has made a big difference,” she said. Linda takes yoga classes four days a week now and feels inspired. She eats more vegetables, fruits and lean meats, balancing the amount of protein and fat she consumes.

“I have chronic pancreatitis and suffer from frequent bowel obstructions. The DSMP workshop not only helped me manage my diabetes but helped me also learn how to manage nutrients better so that my health is improved overall.” Linda is already taking 50 percent less medication for managing ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder).

Linda said she now realizes that it’s actually less expensive to eat healthy, so she has been saving money on groceries since taking the class. Her service dog, Cherokee, has started walking with her two miles nearly every day of the week. “My therapist is really impressed with my progress,” she said. “I am so grateful for Ridgeview bringing the class to my facility, and for the tremendous encouragement and support that I have received from staff, friends, and family. Recovery to better health has been a spiritual experience for me. I give my God the glory, and I hope that my progress will inspire others.”

## Learn to Make... Whole Wheat Dark Chocolate Chip Cookies with Walnuts!



### Ingredients:

- 3 cups whole wheat flour
- 1 ½ cups coconut palm sugar
- 1 stick of real butter, melted (or coconut oil, if preferred)
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- ¾ teaspoon baking soda
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- 2 cups semisweet chocolate chips (more or less as desired)
- ½ cup chopped walnuts
- 1 cup of water

### Directions:

Combine the flour, sugar, baking soda and salt in a large bowl. Add chocolate chips and walnuts and stir well. In a separate bowl, mix the butter (melted), egg, and vanilla. Add to the flour mixture and stir well. Add water, a little at a time, until the dough is moist, yet firm, and sticks together.

Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Preheat oven to 350° and shape the dough into balls; place on an ungreased baking sheet and press lightly to slightly flatten. Bake for 18 – 25 minutes. (Check them often. When they are firm around the edge and slightly moist in the center they are done.). Let cool and enjoy (in moderation)!

Makes 1 ½ dozen

## Johnson City Hosts First Championship Games!

By Julie Fann, Peer Wellness Coach

The Championship Games finally came to the Mountain Empire region of East Tennessee!

For the past several months, staff and members of peer support and victory centers of Frontier Health created their banners and worked on building stamina so they could compete. On June 3<sup>rd</sup>, about 120 people attended the games at Rotary Park in Johnson City and competed in a tennis ball throw, 50-yard dash and speed walk, a water relay race and tug-of-war.

Mark Bresee led everyone in a board-breaking activity by teaching them a useful martial arts skill. And dancing was on the agenda. After lunch, those who wanted to participated in a dance competition – the Cha-Cha Slide was the featured dance.

“My members are still flying high from the games!” said Myrrh Miller, director of Freedom Peer Support Center in Greeneville. “I can watch their faces when they look at the banner they made and the trophy they won and they look full of pride.” Myrrh said she believes reminders of the games will help encourage members throughout the year and inspire them as they prepare for the next one.

The Johnson City Victory Center won the Best Banner trophy and the Greeneville Peer Support and Victory Centers are sharing the Most Team Spirit award.

“I can't think of anything that is a better member/staff bonding tool than the Championship Games. Plus ‘we’ staff had a GREAT time as well. It was also good for us to grow closer, enjoy each other’s company and see each other in a less structured environment,” Myrrh said.

The *My Health, My Choice, My Life* team hopes this is the beginning of a long tradition in East Tennessee!

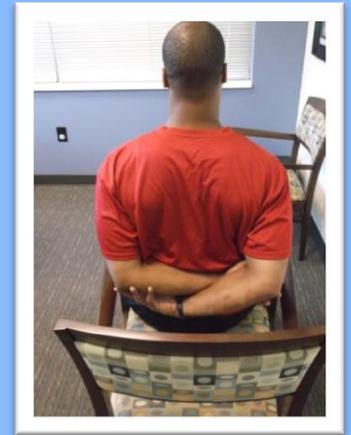


# Donald's Move of the Month

When you spend the majority of your time with your arms in front of you, it becomes habit for your body to round the shoulders. As a result the muscles in the upper back and neck strain, overstretch and overwork. The muscles in the chest shorten, the small muscles between the shoulder blades weaken. Smaller muscles that are not designed to be postural muscles have to work doing a job they were not designed to do. Poor posture causes many types of muscle and ligament imbalances which can lead to chronic back, neck and shoulder pain, headaches, fatigue, difficulty breathing and other more devastating health problems. This stretch is very important to work into your training program. It can be done sitting in a chair, standing or sitting on the floor. This stretch is great for someone with an office or desk job.

## Back Bound Pose

Squeeze your shoulder blades down and bring both arms and hands behind you. Grab the right elbow with the left hand and then grab the left elbow with your right hand. If this is too difficult, grab your wrist or forearm with the opposite hand. Take a few deep breaths. Lift your chest and keep your shoulder blades down and back. Now repeat by grabbing your left elbow with your right hand this time.



## The Power of Power Poses

By Lindsey Johnson, Peer Wellness Coach

I'm sure you've heard that the mind has a powerful effect on our bodies. In our workshops as wellness coaches, we even teach about this effect with both information and demonstration.

It is true that our minds play a huge role in our body's response, but Amy Cuddy, a social psychologist from Harvard University, wanted to know if our bodies had any effect on our minds.

Cuddy performed an experiment in which she asked two groups of people to do two different things. The first group held a "low-power" pose for two minutes where the participants would close off their bodies and "shrink into themselves." The second group held a "high-power" pose for two minutes where they displayed dominant feelings and open body language. High-power poses could be standing tall like superman or wonder woman.

Cuddy then tested the participants' levels of a stress hormone called cortisol, and a dominance hormone called testosterone when they were asked to gamble.

The results showed that those in the low power poses had a 15% increase in cortisol, the stress hormone, and a 20% decrease in testosterone, the dominance hormone.

In the group that held high-power poses the results showed a 25% reduction in cortisol and a 20% increase in testosterone. Therefore, she concluded that your body language has a significant impact on how you think about yourself as well as your responses in stressful circumstances.

Cuddy concluded her discussion about her findings with a question: What if you feel fake? She explained that several of those she's spoken to about these findings explain that it "just feels fake." Cuddy explained that she doesn't believe in "Fake it til' you make it." She believes you can "Fake it til' you become it." With enough practice and repetition, you can become more confident in handling stressful situations.

### Reference

*Your Body Language Shapes Who You Are*. Perf. Amy Cuddy. TEDGlobal, 2012. Online Video.

## Diabetes Self-Management Program Success!

By Leanne Crawford, Peer Wellness Coach

Participants in the six-week Diabetes Self-Management Program (DSMP) at Cherokee Health Systems Maynardville Day Program learned several things about diabetes including:

- Diabetes monitoring
- Healthy eating
- Common problems with diabetes
- Preventing low blood sugar
- Preventing complications from diabetes
- Planning low-fat meals/diabetic friendly meals
- Physical activity/ exercise
- Dealing with stress
- Muscle relaxation
- Dealing with difficult emotions
- Reading nutrition labels
- Depression management
- Medication usage
- Proper foot care
- Working with your Health Care Provider

Led by Peer Wellness Coach Leanne Crawford and co-facilitated by Dena Daughtery, Day Program Provider in Maynardville, the program concluded with a graduation celebration that included a small ceremony and a healthy meal.

Participants walked to the front of the room where they were given a certificate of completion, a *My Health, My Choice, My Life* pencil and a silicon bracelet that lists the five food groups. The celebration also included a healthy meal which consisted of Subway turkey, ham or



veggie sandwiches plus cuties (oranges), apples with low fat caramel dip, sun chips and water. Participants were also given a group gift of two inside walking DVD's as they enjoy doing physical activity each day after their group.

Participants made weekly action plans and most were successful each week in completing them. The results absolutely showed at the post assessments when it was revealed that this group lost a total of 25.4 pounds over the six-week time period. Way to go, Maynardville peers!



## Shall We Dance?

By Mark Bresee, Peer Wellness Coach



When the *My Health, My Choice, My Life* Peer Wellness Coaches plan a group event, they usually include dance as an activity. Why would they do that? Dancing is one of the most health-producing activities people can do. World-class, in-depth, scientific research says so.<sup>1 2</sup> For example:

Compared to activities such as exercising, walking, or playing an instrument, dance has the advantage to combine many diverse features including physical activity, social and emotional interaction, each of them well-documented to have beneficial effects.<sup>3</sup>

Dancing involves physical activity and creativity, bringing benefits to the body and the brain. Learning new dances helps improve memory. Coordination, balance, flexibility, and posture also improve when folks step and swing. Dance offers opportunities for social interaction on a level not available in a jogging-on-a-treadmill experience. Dancing includes music, which has the power to evoke a wide range of positive emotions. Music touches people on levels so deep it is used as a real form of therapy.<sup>4</sup>

Dancing is not just for the young. Current research on healthy aging shows it is one of the best activities around to keep our brains healthy over time, making it especially relevant to those middle aged and up.<sup>5</sup>

Dancing offers the opportunity for people to move at their own pace. This mood-lifting, smile-producing, heart-pounding activity comes in an endless variety of styles and steps. If you have had difficulty staying with an exercise program, dancing may be just the thing for you. Studies show people are more likely to continue dancing than many other types of physical activity because it is so much fun!<sup>6</sup>

If you feel self-conscious on the dance floor with other people around, try some moves on your own time in your own space. You can join with others once you get a little confidence.

Don't wait until the *My Health, My Choice, My Life* team shows up to provide an opportunity to move with the music. More dancing means more benefits. Whatever physical activity you are doing these days, keep it up. Add dancing to your routine and shake it up!

<sup>1</sup>Dhami, Prabhjot, Moreno, Sylvain, DeSouza, Joseph F. X., *Frontiers in Psychology*, "New Framework for rehabilitation – fusion of cognitive and physical rehabilitation: the hope for dancing." 2014; 5: 1478.

<sup>2</sup>Se-Hong Kim, Minjeong Kim, Yu-Bae Ahn, Hyun-Kook Lim, Sung-Good Kang, Jung-hyoun Cho, Seo-Jin Park, and Sang-Wook Song, *Journal of Sports Science and Medicine*, December 10, 2011, (4): 671-678.

<sup>3</sup> Kattenstroth, J.C., Kolankowska, I, Kalisch, T., *Frontiers in Aging Neuroscience*, "Superior sensory, motor, and cognitive performance in elderly individuals with multiple-year dancing activities." 2010 Jul 21; Vol. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Same as above

<sup>5</sup> Keogh, J.W., Kilding A, Pidgeon P, Ashley L, Gillis D., *Journal of Aging Physical Activity*, Physical benefits of dancing for healthy older adults: a review. 2009 Oct; 17(4):479-500.

<sup>6</sup> Se-Hong Kim, Minjeong Kim, Yu-Bae Ahn, Hyun-Kook Lim, Sung-Goo Kang, Jung-hyoun Cho, Seo-Jin Park and Sang-Wook Song. *Journal of Sports Science*. Effect of Dance Exercise on Cognitive Function in Elderly Patients with Metabolic Syndrome: A Pilot Study. (2011) 10, 671-678.

# Find the Fruits That Are in Season!

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Word Bank

- Blackberries
- Blueberries
- Cantaloupe
- Cherries
- Figs
- Grapefruit
- Grapes
- Honeydew
- Jackfruit
- Limes
- Lychee
- Mulberries
- Nectarines
- Peaches
- Raspberries
- Strawberries
- Watermelon

**DID YOU KNOW** ... you can save money by buying fruits that are in season? When not in season, fruits and vegetables can cost more. That's why different produce items are more expensive at different times of the year. If you're looking to save money, try sticking to what's in season!



## Meet Our Newest Coach, Dina Savvenas!

Constandina "Dina" Savvenas, a Johnson City, native, earned a BS in Psychology and an MA in Storytelling from East Tennessee State University (ETSU). She worked as a case manager for domestic violence programs during her studies and moved west after graduation to pursue her wildest dreams of film acting. She has appeared on numerous TV shows! Perhaps you've seen her on VH1's Rock of Love with Bret Michaels. She recently earned a certificate in personal training and is very passionate about holistic health and wellness. Dina is excited and grateful for the opportunity to be a Peer Wellness Coach with Frontier Health and to be able to share her own victories with others seeking to overcome challenges similar to the ones she has faced. Dina enjoys theatre arts, bellydance, and the great outdoors.

